DEAF-BLIND CHILDREN LEARN
TO "SEE AND HEAR" THROUGH
SENSE OF TOUCH

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WITH ELBOWS TOUCHING PIANO, TWO OF THESE THREE PUPILS AT DEAF-BLIND SCHOOL FEEL RHYTHM OF MUSIC. GIRL AT LEFT, NOT TOUCHING, IS CLAPPING OFF BEAT

Life Nov. 18, 1940

DEAF-BLIND CHILDREN LEARN TO "SEE AND HEAR" THROUGH SENSE OF TOUCH

At the piano in the picture above are three of the 69 known U. S. children who suffer the total handicap of being both deaf and blind and, consequently, dumb. Until their affliction was dramatized by Helen Keller's *Story of My Life*, deaf-blind children were often cruelly neglected as feeble-minded. These three little girls and five other children are pupils at the Deaf-Blind School of the New York Institute of the Blind, where they are learning to read, write and speak like normal children, to make their sense of touch do the work of eyes and ears.

Their education, despite their handicaps, proceeds like that of the ordinary child. First, with patient and intensive supervision, they learn to distinguish spoken words by touch and master a substitute for hearing in the speech-reading shown below. Then they learn to spell, can communicate by hand codes and are able to read and write Braille. When they have thus comprehended the faculty of speech, they are taught by tongue and breath exercises to shape the words they can never hear. Finally, with their sensitivity of touch, they can learn to reproduce the pitch and inflection that they have felt in the vibrations of musical strings and human voices.

Speech-reading requires sensitive hands and long practice. Thumb on lips feels shaping of word, fingers feel vibrations. These girls have learned to speak.

With fingers on cheek pupil can now make out words without putting thumb across speaker's lips.

Hand on head, feeling remote speech vibrations, is accomplishment of pupil with very sensitive touch.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Learning to read, Helen Siefert was first taught, like any child, to associate everyday objects with alphabet, except that her alphabet is tactual, not visual. Braille letters here spell "a monkey." A growing body of literature is today being brailled.

Braille typer helps Helen speed schoolwork. With braille stylus and slate, she can write by hand. Later she will take school examinations on regular typewriter. Her skill at typing will later be an important means of contact with the outside world.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

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Electric guitar helps Helen Siefert develop a sense of pitch and inflection that will relieve her voice of the monotony which is characteristic of deaf people. She feels notes through her feet on a loud-speaker and has mastered a repertory of simple melodies.

Electric vibrator gives the pupil a sense of voice inflection directly, by translating the sound waves of teacher's voice into impulses that can be felt through vibrator on mastoid bone. Tongue and breath exercises teach her to shape vowels and consonants.

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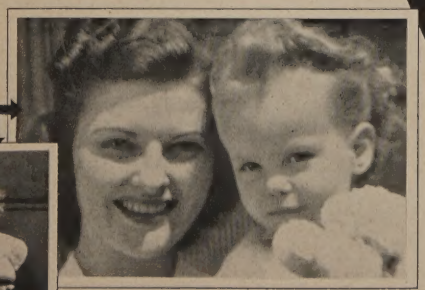

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